

TO: The Honorable Senator Anne Carney
The Honorable Representative Matt Moonen Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary

DATE: February 26, 2024

RE: LD 2007 - An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

TO: The Honorable Senator Anne Carney
The Honorable Representative Matt Moonen Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary

My name is Mary Finn and I am a resident of Wiscasset.

I retired in 2020 and have spent part of my time since then learning about the history of this state, and specifically the Wabanaki People. This history continues to reveal itself the more that I read and learn as a retired person.

Recognizing tribal sovereignty means respecting the right to self-government among Wabanaki People. Many of the best features of American democracy were influenced by principles of equality, freedom and respect that were common in tribal governments. Our founders were inspired by these examples as they crafted our new nation. By recognizing tribal sovereignty, we affirm our belief in democracy.

Native people in Maine are not able to benefit laws passed at the national level, and the State of Maine has not kept up with passing laws to benefit the Wabanaki People in Maine, which they were expected to do on the passage of the Settlement Act. One of these areas is voting rights. Maine was the last state to comply with the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, which conferred US citizenship on all Native Americans born within this country. Native people in Maine did not have equal voting rights until the 1960s! Difficult to believe, but true.

It's important for the Wabanaki people in Maine to have the benefits of all protections that come with equal status of all federally recognized tribes. LD 2007 would restore fairness and equity for the Wabanaki tribes in Maine.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 2007.

Sincerely,
Mary Finn

258 Old Sheepscot Rd
Wiscasset, ME